

THE PRINCIPLE OF HOPE

Volume One

Ernst Bloch

Translated by Neville Plaice,
Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight

The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts

towards this state of the goal-content, it has its openness and positiveness within it.

THE WORLD
IN WHICH UTOPIAN IMAGINATION
HAS A CORRELATE
REAL POSSIBILITY, THE CATEGORIES FRONT,
NOVUM, ULTIMUM AND THE HORIZON

17

The critic can therefore latch on to any form of theoretical and practical consciousness and develop true reality out of the separate forms of existing reality as their obligation and their final purpose. . . It will then become apparent that the world has long possessed the dream of a matter, of which it must only possess the consciousness in order to possess it in reality.

Marx, letter to Ruge, 1843

I am convinced that the world-spirit gave the age the command to advance; such a command is obeyed; this entity moves irresistibly forward like an armoured, tightly-closed phalanx with the same undiscernible movement with which the sun moves, through thick and thin; countless light troops are flanked around it, for and against, most of them have no idea what it is about and are run through the head, as if by an unseen hand. The best bet, however, is to keep a close eye on the advancing giant.

Hegel, letter to Niethammer, 1816

Man is not solid

To think oneself into what is better, this proceeds at first only inwardly. It indicates how much youth there is in man, how much lies in him that is waiting. This waiting will not go to sleep, however many times it has been buried, even in a desperate man it does not stare into complete nothingness. Even the suicide still flees into negation as into a womb; he expects rest. Even disappointed hope wanders around agonizing, a ghost that has lost its way back to the cemetery and clings to refuted images. It does not perish through itself, but only through a new form of itself. The fact that we can thus *sail* into dreams, that daydreams, often of a completely uncovered kind, are possible, indicates the great space of the still open, still uncertain life in man. Man spins out wishes, is in a position to do so, finds a wealth of material for them, even if it is not always of

the best, most durable quality, in himself. This fermenting and effervescing above the consciousness that has become is the *first correlate* of the imagination, a correlate which to begin with is merely inward, in fact only located within itself. Even the silliest dreams nevertheless exist as foam;* daydreams even contain a foam from which a Venus has sometimes risen. The animal knows nothing of this kind; only man, although he is much more awake, wells up utopianly. His existence is less solid as it were, although, compared with plants and animals, he is much more intensely present. Human existence has nevertheless more fermenting Being, more dawning material on its upper edge and hem. Something has as it were remained hollow here, in fact a new hollow space has only just developed. Dreams drift in it, and possible things circulate inwardly which can perhaps never become outward.

Much in the world is still unclosed

Of course, nothing would circulate inwardly either if the outward were completely solid. Outside, however, life is just as little finished as in the ego which is working on this outside. No thing could be altered in accordance with wishes if the world were closed, full of fixed, even perfected facts. Instead of these there are simply processes, i.e. dynamic relationships in which the Become has not completely triumphed. The Real is process; the latter is the widely ramified mediation between present, unfinished past, and above all: possible future. Indeed, everything real passes over into the Possible at its processual Front, and possible is everything that is only partially conditioned, that has not yet been fully or conclusively determined. Here we must of course distinguish between the merely cognitively or objectively Possible and the Real-Possible, the only one that matters in the given context. *Objectively* possible is everything whose entry, on the basis of a mere partial-cognition of its existing conditions, is scientifically to be expected, or at least cannot be discounted. Whereas *really* possible is everything whose conditions in the sphere of the *object itself* are not yet fully assembled; whether because they are still maturing, or above all because new conditions – though mediated with the existing ones – arise for the entry of a new Real. Mobile, changing, changeable Being, presenting itself as dialectical-material, has this unclosed capability of becoming, this Not-Yet-Closedness both in its ground and in its horizon

* Bloch is alluding to the German saying 'Träume sind Schäume' (Dreams are just foam).

So that we may deduce from this: the really Possible of *sufficiently mediated*, i.e. *dialectically-materialistically mediated newness* gives utopian imagination its *second, its concrete correlate*: one outside a mere fermenting, effervescing in the inner circle of consciousness. And as long as the reality has not become a completely determined one, as long as it possesses still unclosed possibilities, in the shape of new shoots and new spaces for development, then no absolute objection to utopia can be raised by merely factual reality. Objections to bad utopias can be raised, i.e. to abstractly extravagant, badly mediated ones, but precisely concrete utopia has in *process-reality* a corresponding element: that of the mediated Novum. Only this process-reality, and not a fact-basedness torn out of it which is reified and made absolute, can therefore pass judgement on utopian dreams or relegate them to mere illusions. If we give every mere factuality in the external world this critical right, then we make what is fixedly existing and what has fixedly become into absolute reality per se. It becomes clear, however, even merely within the vastly altered reality of today, that the restriction to the Factum was hardly a realistic one; that reality itself is not worked up, that it has something advancing and breaking out at its edge. Man today is thoroughly acquainted with the frontier-existence outside the previous expectation-context of Becomeness. He no longer sees himself surrounded by ostensibly completed facts, and no longer considers these as the only Real; devastatingly, possible fascist Nothing has opened up in this Real, and above all, finally feasible and overdue, socialism. A different concept of reality to the narrow and ossified one of the second half of the nineteenth century is thus overdue, a different one to that of the positivism to which the idea of process is alien, and of its counterpart: the non-committal ideal world of pure appearance. Sometimes the ossified concept of reality even penetrated Marxism and consequently made it schematic. It is not sufficient to speak of dialectical process and then to treat history as a series of sequential Fixa or even closed 'totalities'. A narrowing and diminishing of reality threatens here, a turning away from 'efficacy and seed'* in reality; and that is not Marxism. Rather: the concrete imagination and the imagery of its mediated anticipations are fermenting in the process of the real itself and are depicted in the concrete forward dream; anticipating elements are a component of reality itself. Thus the will towards utopia is entirely

* From Goethe's 'Faust', Part I, 384:

'All efficacy and seed explore
and rummage round in words no more.'

compatible with object-based tendency, in fact is confirmed and at home within it.

Militant optimism, the categories Front, Novum, Ultimum

Precisely the defeated man must try the outside world again. That which is coming up is not yet decided, that which is swamp can be dried out through work. Through a combination of courage and knowledge, the future does not come over man as fate, but man overcomes the future and enters it with what is his. However, the knowledge needed by courage and above all decision cannot have the most common mode of previous knowledge: namely a contemplative mode. Because merely contemplative knowledge necessarily refers to what is closed and thus to what is past, it is helpless against what is present and blind to the future. In fact, it appears to itself all the more as knowledge, the further back its objects lie in what is past and closed, the less therefore it contributes to the process of something being learnt for the present and future from history, a history that occurs in tendency. The knowledge necessary for decision accordingly has a different mode: one which is not merely contemplative, but rather one which goes with process, which is actively and partisanly in league with the good which is working its way through, i.e. what is humanly worthy in process. It goes without saying that this mode of knowledge is also the only objective one, the only one which reflects the Real in history: namely the events produced by working people together with the abundant interweaving process-connections between past, present and future. And knowledge of this kind, precisely because it is not merely contemplative, thoroughly mobilizes the subjects of conscious production itself. Since it is not quietism, even in relation to discovered tendency, it does not revere that banal, automatic progress-optimism per se which is only a reprise of contemplative quietism. The optimism is this reprise because it also disguises the future as past, because it regards the future as something which has long since been decided and thus concluded. Confronted with the future-state which stands like an agreed consequence in the so-called iron logic of history, the subject can just as easily lay his hands in his lap as he once folded them when confronted with God's will. In similar fashion, for example, by leaving capitalism to function to its conclusion, it was appointed as its own grave-digger, and even its dialectic appeared to be self-sufficient, to be autarkical. All this is fundamentally false, however,

in fact so patently just new opium for the people that, cum grano salis, even a dash of pessimism would be preferable to the banal, automatic belief in progress as such. Because at least pessimism with a realistic perspective is not so helplessly surprised by mistakes and catastrophes, by the horrifying possibilities which have been concealed and will continue to be concealed precisely in capitalist progress. Thinking ad pessimum, for every analysis which does not make it absolute again, is a better travelling companion than cheap credulity; it thus constitutes the critical coldness precisely in Marxism. For every changing decision, automatic optimism is not much less of a poison than pessimism made absolute; since, if the latter quite openly serves shameless reaction, which calls itself by its own name, with the aim of discouraging, then the former helps shamefaced reaction with the aim of fostering winking connivance and passivity. Thus, rather than false optimism, the only thing that is assigned – in order to foster true optimism – to the knowledge of decision, to the decision of attained knowledge, is once again the *concretely and utopianly comprehended correlate in real possibility*: comprehended as one in which of course it is by no means already the night to end all days, but just as little – in the sense of non-utopian optimism – already the day to end all nights.* The attitude towards this undecided material, which can however be decided through work and concretely mediated action, is called *militant optimism*. Through this, as Marx says, no abstract ideals are realized, but rather the repressed elements of the new, humanized society, that is, of the concrete ideal, are set free. It is the revolutionary decision of the proletariat which today commits itself to the final struggle of liberation, a decision of the subjective factor in alliance with the objective factors of economic-material tendency. And it is not as if this subjective factor, that of realization and of changing the world, were any other than a material activity; it is such, even if, as Marx stresses in the first thesis on Feuerbach, as the *active side* (generation, productivity, spontaneity of consciousness), it has certainly been developed primarily from idealism and not from (mechanical) materialism. And once again it is not as if even for one moment the activity which is part of changing the world, i.e. of militant optimism, could really intervene or bring about lasting change without being allied with real, present tendencies; because if the subjective factor remains isolated, then it simply becomes a factor

* Bloch is playing on a German saying 'It is not yet the night to end all days', an English equivalent of which would be 'We are not yet out of the wood'.

of putschism, not of revolution, of Spiegelbergian forays, * not of the work. If, however, there is insight into the consequences of the decision – and it is precisely the knowledge in the decision which guarantees this insight – then the power of the subjective factor cannot be estimated highly or even deeply enough, precisely as the *militant function* in militant optimism. Concrete decision in favour of the victory of light in real possibility is the same as countermove against failure in process. Is the same as the countermove of freedom against so-called destiny which has been removed from process and which counteracts it through stagnation and reification. Is the same as the countermove against all these deadly manifestations from the family of Nothing and against the circulation of Nothing, the other alternative to real possibility itself. Is thus ultimately the countermove against the pervasive ruin of pure negation (war, advent of barbarism), so that, by redirecting this destruction on to itself, the negation of the negation may also find space here and the dialectic actively triumph. Concrete decision is always in conflict with statics here, yet precisely because it is not putschism, but rather, being militant, is equally *founded* optimism, it lives in peace with process which brushes death-statics itself the wrong way. Man and process, or rather: subject and object in dialectically materialist process, consequently both stand equally on the Front. And there is no other place for militant optimism than the place which the *category of Front* opens up. The philosophy of this optimism, that is, of materially comprehended hope, is itself, as the trenchant knowledge of non-contemplation, concerned with the foremost segment of history, and is so even when it concerns itself with the past, namely with the still undischarged future in the past. Philosophy of comprehended hope thus stands per definitionem on the Front of the world process, i.e. on the so little thought-out, foremost segment of Being of animated, utopianly open matter.

Not everything that is well-known is also known, least of all when freshness is present. Thus along with the concept of the Front the so closely related concept of *newness* is also in a parlous state. The New: it circulates in the mind in first love, also in the feeling of spring; the latter has nevertheless hardly found a single philosopher. It permeates, though it is forgotten time and again, the eve of great events, together with a highly characteristic mixed reaction of fear, being armed, confidence; it finds, in the promised Novum of happiness, advent consciousness. It runs through the expectations of almost all religions, in so far as primitive, even ancient oriental future

* Spiegelberg: the unscrupulous marauder in Schiller's 'The Robbers'.

consciousness can be properly understood at all; it pervades the whole of the Bible, from Jacob's blessing to the Son of Man who makes everything new, and to the new heaven, the new earth. Nevertheless, the *category Novum* has not been described anything like adequately enough, and found no place in any pre-Marxist world-picture. Or if it did seem to find it, as in Boutroux* or above all in the Art Nouveau or secession philosophy of Bergson, then the New was simply considered from the point of view of senselessly changing fashions and celebrated as such; all that resulted from this was the different rigidity of a surprise that is always the same. This kind of thing has already been made clear in the case of the block which has obstructed the concept of the Not-Yet-Conscious for so long; in such a way that the dawning, the *Incipit vita nova*, also repeatedly remains a *Fixum* in the so-called Philosophy of Life. Thus the concept of the New in Bergson simply appears as abstract contrast to repetition, in fact often as merely the reverse side of mechanical uniformity; at the same time it was attributed to every moment of life without exception, and was consequently devalued. Even the duration of a thing, the *durée* which is imagined as being fluid, is based by Bergson on continual difference; supposedly because in truly unchanged persistence the beginning and end of this state would be indistinguishable, would objectively coincide, and consequently the thing would not have duration at all. And the *Novum* as a whole in Bergson is not elucidated by its path, its explosions, its dialectic, its images of hope and genuine products, but in fact repeatedly by the contrast to mechanism, by the contentless declaration of an *élan vital* in and for itself. Great love for the *Novum* is active, great inclination towards openness leaps to the eye, but the process remains empty and repeatedly produces nothing but process. In fact, the eternal metaphysical vitality theory ultimately achieves a mere frenzy instead of the *Novum*, precisely because of the constantly required change of direction, required for its own sake; so it is not the curve praised by Bergson that develops with this change, but rather a zig-zag in which – from sheer opposition to uniformity – there is only the figure of chaos. Consequently, the abstractly understood *Futurum* also ends in a *l'art pour l'art* of vitality which Bergson himself compares to the rocket or 'to an immense firework which continually shoots out new bursts of fire' (*L'Évolution créatrice*, 1907, p. 270). Here too we must emphasize: there is absolutely no genuine *Novum* in Bergson; he has in fact only developed his concept from sheer excess into capitalistic fashion-novelty and thus stabilized it; *élan vital* and

* Émile Boutroux, 1845-1921, French philosopher of science.

nothing more is and remains itself a *Fixum* of contemplation. The social reason for Bergson's pseudo-*Novum* lies in the late bourgeoisie, which has within it absolutely nothing new in terms of content. The corresponding ideological reason ultimately lies in the old, laboriously reproduced elimination of two of the most essential qualities of the *Novum* in general: possibility and finality. In both, Bergson sees the same schematics of deadening reason hostile to change which he sees at work elsewhere as spatialization, causality, mechanism. The mighty realm of *possibility* thus becomes for him an illusion of – retrospection: there is no Possible in Bergson whatsoever, for him it is a projection which is sketched back into the past by what is newly developing. In the Possible, according to Bergson, the just arising *Novum* is only to be conceived as 'having been possible': 'The possible is nothing other than the real plus a mental act which reflects the image of this real into the past, as soon as the real has developed. . . . The real welling-up of unforeseeable newness, not predestinated in any possible, is however a real which makes itself possible, not a possible that becomes real (*La Pensée et le Mouvant*, p. 133). Bergson thus characteristically almost reproduces the anti-possibility proof of the Megarian philosopher Diodoros Kronos, who was in fact himself close to the Eleatic philosophers, the teachers of an absolute rest. And similarly, Bergson closes his mind to the concept of the *Novum* by regarding *finality* simply as the establishing of a rigid final goal, rather than as the goal-determination of the human will, which first seeks precisely its *Where To* and *What For*, in the open possibilities of the future. Or rather: as the goal-determination of a work, above all of a planning, which has stressed its *Where To* and *What For* and goes about achieving it. Bergson, however, in equating all foreseeability with static prediction, has not only ignored creative anticipation, this reddening dawn in the human will, but the genuine *Novum* as a whole, the horizon of utopia. And the continually stressed changeableness, boundlessness, hardly made Bergson's newness-universe into what, with nevertheless unmistakable finality, he fantasized it to be: into 'the machine to produce gods'. To sum up: appropriate to the *Novum*, so that it really is one, is not only abstract opposition to mechanical repetition, but actually also a kind of specific repetition: namely of the still unbecome total goal-content itself, which is suggested and tended, tested and processed out in the progressive newnesses of history. Thus moreover: the dialectical emergence of this total content is no longer described by the category *Novum*, but rather by the category *Ultimum*, and with this of course the repetition ends. But it only ends by virtue

of the fact that, to the same extent that the *Ultimum* represents the last, i.e. the highest newness, the repetition (the unremitting representedness of the tendency-goal in all progressively New) intensifies to the last, highest, most fundamental repetition: of identity. And the newness in the *Ultimum* really triumphs by means of its total leap out of everything that previously existed, but it is a leap towards the newness that is ending or identity. The category *Ultimum* has not been left as unconsidered as that of the *Novum*; the idea of the Last Thing has always been a subject of those religions which also set a time-limit to time, and thus above all of Judaeo-Christian philosophy of religion. However, this categorial treatment precisely indicated that the one which properly ought to precede it, that of the *Novum*, was as good as absent. Because in the whole of Judaeo-Christian philosophy, from Philo and Augustine to Hegel, the *Ultimum* relates exclusively to a *Primum* and not to a *Novum*; consequently the Last Thing appears simply as the attained return of an already completed First Thing which has been lost or relinquished. The form of this return incorporates the pre-Christian form of the self-combusting and self-renewing Phoenix, it incorporates the Heraclitean and Stoic doctrine of world-conflagration, according to which the Zeus-fire takes the world back into itself and similarly, in periodic cycles, releases it again. And in fact we may say: the *cycle* is the figure which the *Ultimum* attaches so firmly to the *Primum* that it misfires logically and metaphysically within it. Of course, Hegel saw in the Being-for-itself of the idea, which is its *Ultimum* and in which process dies away as in an amen, the *Primum* of the Being-in-itself of the idea not only reproduced but fulfilled: the 'mediated immediacy' is attained in the Being-for-itself, rather than the unmediated immediacy in the beginning of the mere Being-in-itself. But, as in every individual form-epoch of the world process, and consequently also in its totality, this result nevertheless remained a cyclical one here; it is the cycle, completely free of the *Novum*, of the *restitutio in integrum*: 'Every part of philosophy is a philosophical whole, a circle which closes in upon itself, . . . the whole thus presents itself as a circle of circles' (*Enzyklopädie*, §15). Likewise, despite having been thought out more thoroughly, the *Ultimum* was also invariably defused here, in that its Omega coils back into the Alpha again without the power of the *Novum*. In the final analysis, this is also true where mechanically and materialistically the Alpha-Omega has been secularized into a ball of vapour out of which the world emerges and into which it disperses again. The original and the archetype of all this remains the Alpha-Omega in the embracing ring of a primal being to which process

returns almost as a prodigal son and undoes the substance of its Novum. These are all in fact prison-formations against real possibility or a disavowal of it which seeks to visualize even the most progressive historical product solely as the re-remembering or restoration of something once possessed, primally lost. Consequently, as is evident precisely in the Ultimatum, in the case of this Novum, but also in that of all previous Novum, only anti-re-remembering, anti-Augustine, anti-Hegel is philosophically appropriate, anti-circle and denial of the ring-principle, that intended from Hegel and Eduard von Hartmann, in fact as far as Nietzsche. Yet hope, which does not want to be just as far at any end as it was at the beginning, does away with the sharp cycle. The dialectic which has its motor in unrest and its goal-content, which in no way exists ante rem, in unappeared essence does away with the dogged cycle. The tension-figures and tendency-forms, the real-ciphers in the world, even these rehearsals on an as yet unsuccessful model, do away with the fundamentally sterile cycle through their especially high percentage of utopia. The humanization of nature has no parental home at the beginning from which it runs away, to which, with a kind of ancestor cult in philosophy, it returns. In fact in process itself, still without the problem of the Ultimatum, a horde of real possibilities emerge which were not predicted of the beginning at birth. And the end is not the bringing back, rather it is – precisely as the impact of the What-essence on the That-ground – the blasting open of the primum agens materiale. In other words: the Omega of the Where To explains itself not with reference to a primally been Alpha, supposedly most real of all, of the Where From, of the origin, but on the contrary: this origin explains itself first with reference to the Novum of the end, indeed, as an origin still essentially unrealized in itself, it first enters reality with this Ultimatum. The origin is certainly the realizing element itself; and yet: just as there is still something immature and not yet realized in the realizing, so the realization of the realizing, of the realizing element itself is always only just starting to begin. In history it is the self-apprehension of the historical doer, working man: in nature it is the realization of that which has been hypothetically called natura naturans or subject of material motion, a problem which has hardly been touched on, even though it is clearly connected with the self-apprehension of working man and lies along the line of extension of Marx's 'humanization of nature'. The site for both kinds of self-apprehension and their Novum, their Ultimatum, is however located solely on the Front of the process of history and is predominantly confronted with only mediated-real possibility. *This remains that which*

corresponds to exact anticipation, concrete utopia as objective-real correlate. In the same sense that the concretely utopian is an objective-real degree of reality on the Front of the occurring world, – as Not-Yet-Being of the ‘naturalization of man, humanization of nature’. Correspondingly, the thus designated realm of freedom develops not as return, but as exodus – though into the always intended promised land, promised by process.

*‘What-Is according to possibility’ and ‘What-Is in possibility’,
cold and warm stream in Marxism*

On the path to the New we must usually, though not always, proceed step by step. Not everything is possible or can be implemented at any time, absent conditions not only hinder, they also block. More rapid progress is of course allowed, even demanded, where the stretch ahead shows no other dangers than over-anxiously or pedantically imagined ones. Thus Russia did not first need to become fully capitalist before it could pursue the socialist goal successfully. Even the complete technological conditions for the construction of socialism could be made good in the Soviet Union, in so far as they had already been developed in other countries and could be taken over from there. On the other hand, obviously, a path which has never been travelled before can only be skipped or jumped over with some failures. Because of course everything is possible for which the conditions exist in a sufficiently partial form, but this is precisely why everything is still factually impossible for which the conditions do not yet exist at all. The goal-image then proves to be subjectively and objectively an illusion; the movement towards it then collapses; at best, if it makes headway, as a consequence of the prevailing and determining socio-economic conditions, a totally different goal is achieved from the one intended in this skipping over, abstract sense. Of course, in the bourgeois ideal dream of human rights, from the outset the tendencies were already active which subsequently ushered in the purest capitalism. But even here a city of brotherly love hovered ahead anyway, a Philadelphia, particularly far removed from the real Philadelphia which was on the agenda of economic history and consequently saw the light of day. And nothing much more than a Philadelphia of that kind would have been the fruit of the pure, the simply chiliastic utopias, if they had not collapsed but had reached the goal according to the measure of the Possible at that time. The economic conditions which the radical will towards the millennium from Joachim

of Fiore to the English millenarians skipped over, and in fact had to skip over, would have announced themselves anyway, even in what was attained itself: and, again by virtue of the still imminent capitalist agenda, they would certainly not have been those which predestine for the kingdom of love. All this has become completely comprehensible through the Marxist discovery which shows that concrete theory-practice is most closely connected to the explored mode of objective-real possibility. Both the critical caution which determines the speed of the path, and the founded expectation which guarantees a militant optimism as regards the goal, are determined through insight into the correlate of possibility. And in such a way that this correlate, as it is now becoming possible to say, itself again has two sides, a reverse side as it were, on which the measures of the *respectively* Possible are written, and a front side on which the Totum of the *finally* Possible indicates that it is still open. In fact, the first side, that of the *existing decisively conditions*, teaches conduct on the path to the goal, whereas the second side, that of the *utopian Totum*, fundamentally prevents partial attainments on this path from being taken for the whole goal and from obscuring it. Despite all this it must be stressed: *even this double-sided correlate: real possibility is nothing other than dialectical matter*. Real possibility is only the logical expression for material conditionality of a sufficient kind on the one hand, for material openness (unexhaustedness of the womb of matter) on the other. Already above, in the previous chapter (cf. p. 191), on the subject of the 'disrupting subsidiary causes' during realization, a part of the *Aristotelian definitions of matter was enlisted*. We mentioned that according to Aristotle mechanical matter ($\tau\delta\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\chi\eta\varsigma$) represents a resistance, and consequently the entelechetic tendency-form cannot reveal itself purely. This is how Aristotle seeks to explain the many inhibitions, chance thwartings, even the innumerable progress-torsos of which the world is full. In the quoted passage, this definition of matter was designated as that of a scapegoat, and so it is, in so far as it is made absolute and in so far as it supposedly serves to send matter to the devil for the purpose of unburdening entelechy in general. But of course there is no mention in Aristotle of any such In General, any such Making Absolute, rather for him matter is in no way limited to the mechanical, and even this, from which $\tau\delta\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\chi\eta\varsigma$ stems, is in fact assigned for the first time to the extremely extensive concept of $\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ or objective-real possibility in Aristotle. This assignment now also opens up a new, not thwarting, but rather determining meaning for the concept of inhibiting matter: $\tau\delta\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\chi\eta\varsigma$ is supplemented and extended through $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \tau\delta\ \delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$,

i.e.: through *What-Is according to possibility*, according to the measures of possibility. Seen from this side, matter is the site of the conditions according to whose stipulations entelechies reveal themselves; τὸ ἐξ ἀνάγκης thus does not only mean mechanics, but much more extensively: continuous conditional connection. And only from this *What-Is-according-to-possibility* does the inhibition ultimately originate which the entelechetic tendency-form experiences on its path. The consequence also originates from here that the sculptor, working under 'more favourable conditions', can create more beautiful bodies than the physical ones that are born, and that a poet removes contingency and narrowness from the path of his creations, transposes them, as Aristotle says in his 'Poetics', from the καθ' ἑκάστων or each individual thing into the καθ' ὅλον or the richer possibilities of a whole. But all this would not have been possible if Aristotle – and this is of central importance – had not already also distinguished the other side, the front side of possibility-matter, in fact recognized it as the side completely free of inhibitions; matter is not only κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, according to possibility, and therefore the respectively conditioning element according to the given measure of the Possible, but it is τὸ δυνάμει ὄν, *What-Is-in-possibility*, therefore the – in Aristotle admittedly still passive – *womb of fertility from which all world-forms inexhaustibly emerge*. With this last definition precisely the friendly, if not the hope-side of objective-real possibility opened up, however long it took for it to be comprehended; the utopian Totum is implied in the δυνάμει ὄν. To repeat and sum up, *What-Is-according-to-possibility in matter precedes the critical consideration of what is respectively to be attained, What-Is-in-possibility in matter precedes the founded expectation of attainability itself*. And since the passive was deleted from the latter definition in the pantheistic school of the Aristotelians, since the δυνάμει ὄν no longer appeared as undefined wax on which the form-entelechies imprint themselves, the potential of matter ultimately became birth and grave and new place of hope for the world-forms in general. This development of the Aristotelian concept of matter runs through the peripatetic physicist Strato, the first great Aristotelian commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias, the oriental Aristotelians Avicenna, Averroës and his natura naturans, the neo-Platonizing Aristotelian Avicbron, through the Christian heretical philosophers of the thirteenth century Amalrich of Bena and David of Dinant, right down to the world-creating matter of Giordano Bruno (cf. here Ernst Bloch, *Avicenna und die Aristotelische Linke*, 1952, p. 30ff.). In fact even the substratum, giving birth to itself, of the Hegelian world-idea, this idea which moves away

so soon from matter, nevertheless contains a large part of matter-potentiality, which has become potent. On this point Lenin, in his 'Philosophical Notebooks', particularly notes the statement from Hegel's Logic: 'That which appears as the activity of form is furthermore also the separate motion of matter itself.' There are several such statements in Hegel, also in his History of Philosophy (Werke XIII, p. 33), concerning the Aristotelian concept of development, where he at least equates his idea of Being-in-itself with the Aristotelian *δύναμις*. And the supposition is justified that without this legacy of Aristotle and Bruno, Marx would not have been able to set much of the Hegelian world-idea on its feet in such a natural way. Nor would the dialectic of process have been rescuable from the so-called world-spirit in materialistic terms and become ascertainable in matter as a law of motion. Thus, however, a very different matter from the mechanical clod appeared, the matter of dialectical materialism, one in which dialectic, process, expropriation of expropriation, humanization of nature are in no way just external epithets, let alone tacked on. So much here for the correlates to critical *consideration of the attainable, to founded expectation of attainability itself* within the overall correlate: real possibility or matter. Coldness and warmth of concrete anticipation are pre-figured in this, are related to these two sides of the real Possible. Its *unexhausted fullness of expectation* shines upon revolutionary theory-practice as enthusiasm, its *strict determinations which cannot be skipped over* demand cool analysis, cautiously precise strategy; the latter indicates cold, the former warm red.

These two ways of being red always go together of course, yet they are distinct from each other. They are related to one another like that which cannot be deceived and that which cannot be disappointed, like acerbity and belief, each in its place and each employed towards the same goal. In Marxism, the act of analysing the situation is entwined with the enthusiastically prospective act. Both acts are united in the dialectical method, in the pathos of the goal, in the totality of the subject-matter treated, yet the difference of view and situation is plain to see. It has been recognized as one between the respective condition-exploration according to the stipulations of the Possible, and the prospect-exploration of What-Is-in-possibility. Research which analyses conditions does equally show prospect, but with its horizon as a *limiting* one, that of the limited Possible. Without such a cooling down Jacobinism or even totally extravagant, most abstractly utopian fanaticism would emerge. Thus lead is here poured into the shoes of overhauling, skipping over, flying over, because experience shows that the real itself has a heavy gait and seldom consists of wings.

But the prospect-exploration of What-Is-in-possibility goes towards the horizon, in the sense of *unobstructed, unmeasured expanse*, in the sense of the Possible which is still unexhausted and unrealized. Only then of course does prospect in the authentic sense result, that is, prospect of the authentic, of the Totum of what is occurring and what is to be pursued, of a not only respectively prevailing, but overall historical, utopian Totum. Without such a warming up of the historical and especially of the currently practical conditional analysis, the latter is subject to the danger of economism and of goal-forgetting opportunism; the latter avoids the mists of fanaticism only in as far as it gets bogged down in the swamp of philistinism, of compromise, and finally of betrayal. Only coldness and warmth of concrete anticipation together therefore ensure that neither the path in itself nor the goal in itself are held apart from one another undialectically and so become reified and isolated. And the conditional analysis on the whole historical-situational stretch emerges both as an unmasking of ideologies and as a disenchantment of metaphysical illusion; precisely this belongs to the most useful *cold stream* of Marxism. Through it Marxist materialism becomes not only the science of conditions, but at the same time the science of struggle and opposition against all ideological inhibitions and concealments of the ultimately decisive conditions, which are always economic. To the *warm stream* of Marxism, however, belong liberating intention and materialistically humane, humanely materialistic real tendency, towards whose goal all these disenchantments are undertaken. From here the strong appeal to the debased, enslaved, abandoned, belittled human being, from here the appeal to the proletariat as the turntable towards emancipation. The goal remains the naturalization of man, humanization of nature which is inherent in developing matter. This final matter or the content of the realm of freedom first approaches in the construction of communism, its only space, has never before been present; that is beyond doubt. But it is also beyond doubt that this content lies within the historical process, and that Marxism represents its strongest consciousness, its highest practical mindfulness. Marxism as a doctrine of warmth is thus solely related to that positive Being-in-possibility, not subject to any disenchantment, which embraces the growing realization of the realizing element, primarily in the human sphere. And which, inside this sphere, signifies the utopian Totum, in fact that freedom, that homeland of identity, in which neither man behaves towards the world, nor the world behaves towards man, as if towards a stranger. This is the doctrine of warmth in the sense of the front side, the Front of matter, hence of forward matter. The path then opens up

within it as function of the goal, and the goal opens up as substance in the path, in the path explored towards its conditions, visualized towards its openesses. Matter is latent in these openesses according to the direction of their objective-real hope-contents: as the end of self-alienation and objectivity encumbered with alien material, as matter of Things For Us. On the path towards this, the objective surpassing of what currently exists in history and world occurs: this transcending without transcendence, which is called process and is accelerated on earth so forcefully by human work. Forward materialism or the warmth-doctrine of Marxism is thus theory-practice of reaching home or of departure from inappropriate objectification; through it the world is developed towards the No-Longer-Alienation of its subjects-objects, hence towards freedom. Undoubtedly only from the vantage point of a classless society does the goal of freedom itself come clearly into our sights as definite Being-in-possibility. Nevertheless it is no great distance from that self-encounter which has been sought in images under the name of culture; with so many ideologies, but also with so many kinds of pre-appearance, anticipations in the horizon. The means by which man first became human was work, the basis of the second stage is the classless society, its framework is a culture whose horizon is surrounded purely by the contents of founded hope, the most important, the positive Being-in-possibility.

Artistic appearance as visible pre-appearance

We say of the beautiful that it gives pleasure, that it is even enjoyed. But its reward does not end there, art is not food. For it remains even after it has been enjoyed, even in the sweetest cases it hangs over into a land which is 'pictured ahead'. The wishful dream goes out here into what is indisputably better, in doing so, in contrast to most political wishful dreams, it has already become work-like, a *shaped* beauty. Only: is there anything more in what has been shaped in this way than a game of appearance? Which may be extremely ingenious but, in contrast to the childlike, does not prepare for anything serious, nor signifies it. In aesthetic ringing or even jingling* is there any hard cash, any statement which can be signed? Paintings prompt us less often to this question, since paint only stands in sensory certainty and is otherwise more weakly burdened with the claim to truth than the word. Since the word not only serves literature,

* Here Bloch is playing on the old German expression 'in klingender Münze': 'in coin of the realm'.

but also truthful communication; language makes us more sensitive to the latter than paint, even than drawing. All good art, of course, finishes its materials in shaped beauty, renders things, people, conflicts in beautiful appearance. But what is the *honest* status of this finish, of a ripeness in which only invented material ripens? How do things stand with a richness which communicates itself in a merely illusionary fashion, as mere appearance to the eye or to the ear? Conversely, how do things stand with Schiller's nevertheless prophetic statement that what we experience here as beauty will one day approach us as truth? How do things stand with Plotinus' statement, and then Hegel's, that beauty is the sensory manifestation of the *idea*? Nietzsche, in his positivist period, sets against this assertion the much more massive one that all poets lie. Or: art makes the aspect of life tolerable by throwing the veil of impure thought over it. Francis Bacon sees the golden apples in silver bowls as really not that far from being an illusion, they belong to the *idola theatri* that have been handed down to us. He compares the truth to the naked bright daylight in which the masks, mummeries and resplendent features of the world do not appear half so beautiful and magnificent as in the candlelight of art. According to this, all artists are from beginning to end in league with appearance, they have no inclination towards truth, but just the opposite inclination. In the whole of the Enlightenment there are premises for this antithesis between art and truth, and they have made artistic imagination an object of suspicion from the factual standpoint. These are the *empirical* objections to the insidious gloom, to the golden mist of art, and they are not the only ones which derive from the Enlightenment. For alongside them stand the *rational* objections which of course originally belong to the Platonic conceptual logos and to its especially celebrated, especially radical hostility to art, but which made themselves fashionable again as objections to art in the trend towards calculating reason in the new bourgeois age. Even where the specific hostility to art, described by Marx, of capitalism in the nineteenth century (with l'art pour l'art as the counterblow and with the Goncourts' declaration of war on 'the public') could not yet make its presence felt. Even the droll inquiry of that French mathematician is relevant here who asked after listening to Racine's 'Iphigénie': 'Qu'est-ce que cela prouve?'" Droll and fetishistically pedantic though this question looks, it still stands as a *purely rational* question in a separate and great school of alienation from art, equal to that of the empirical school. The aesthetic dimension is conspicuously absent in all the great systems of reason of

* 'What does that prove?'

the new rationalist age; the ideas which inhabit it are not considered worthy of the least scientific discussion. Predominantly only *technical* aesthetic theories, albeit of a significant kind, chiefly concerning poetics, blossomed in French classical rationalism, and only the mathematical side of music was of interest to Descartes. Otherwise we do not know either in Descartes or even in Spinoza that there is an art in the ordered connection of ideas and things. Even the universal philosopher Leibniz at best only cited a few examples from art, such as those concerning the harmony-enhancing effect of shadows and dissonances, because such examples were serviceable for something much more important: for the proof of the best of all possible worlds. In Leibniz the harmoniously beautiful is in fact a kind of hint of a scientifically recognizable world-harmony, but it is only a confused hint, and the truth can thus dispense with it. Consequently the aesthetics of rationalism began in a very strange way when it was finally made into a philosophical discipline very late by Baumgarten,* the follower of Wolff; † in fact it began with a decidedly low opinion of its Object, indeed with apologies for its existence. The aesthetic Object was solely the so-called lower cognitive faculty at work in sensory perception and its ideas. And though beauty also represented perfection in this area, it was not comparable in terms of value with the complete clarity of conceptual cognition. The *rationalist* debasement of art thus lines up with the empirical positivist kind after all; – but the list of enemies is still not complete. Indeed, hatred of art only becomes totally glaring when it derives not from reason but, often conversely, from belief, at least from the positing of something *spiritually* true. Then a storm of iconoclasm breaks out – in this case not against the golden mist of art, as was usual in the empirical and ultimately also in the rationalist approach, but against the mainland of art, i.e. against the over-accentuated appearance within it. Beauty, the verdict reads here, seduces us to the superficial, falls for the hollow exterior and thus diverts from the essential nature of things. ‘What good is there in imitating the shadows of shadows?’ asks Plato, already making his conceptual logos almost clerically curt. On the other hand: ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth’, ‡ commands the fourth commandment in the Bible and gives the cue for the iconoclasm of the invisibility of Yahweh, of the banning of all idolatry.

* Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, 1714–62.

† Christian Wolff, 1679–1754, philosopher of the German Enlightenment.

‡ Exodus 20, 4.

Art in general thus becomes gleaming, ultimately luciferian fulfilment which stands in the way of the true undissembling kind, indeed which denies it. This is hostility to art in its *religious* and *spiritual* form; what corresponds to it in morality is, not without reason, the turning away from the all too great visibility of 'works', the turning towards the invisible, genuine dimension of 'convictions'. Puritanism in this extensive sense (reaching back as far as Bernard of Clairvaux) finally culminated in Tolstoy's monstrous hatred of Shakespeare, of the lascivious work of beauty in general. Even in Catholicism a horror pulchri led, under Pope Marcellus, to the planning of a ban on elaborate church music, and this horror, applied to what is visible, gave to Protestantism the bare God who wishes to be worshipped in moral belief, in the word that is the truth. Thus the claim to truth comes out against beauty in so many different forms, empirical and rationalist, spiritual and religious. And however much these different claims to truth (for subjectively the spiritual was one as well) were at variance with themselves and in extreme conflict with one another, they are nevertheless united in the will towards a seriousness opposed to the game of appearance.

This has always affected artists too, precisely because they themselves were serious. They themselves felt committed to the question of truth, because they did not want to be game-players, either immured or decadent ones. How amply the beautiful seeks also to be pictorially true in the descriptions and stories of great realistic writers. Not only in terms of sensory certainty, but also in terms of broadly revealed social contexts and natural processes. How legitimate Homer's realism is, a realism of such exact fullness that almost the whole of Mycenaean culture can be visualized from it. And admittedly not a French mathematician, but Alexander von Humboldt, the naturalist, tells us of the Book of Job, Chapter 37: 'The meteorological processes which take place in the cloud cover, the formation and dispersal of the vapours during various wind changes, their kaleidoscope of colours, the generation of hail and of rolling thunder are described with individual graphicness; many questions are also raised which our modern physics is able to formulate in more scientific terms, but not to solve satisfactorily' (Kosmos II, Cotta, p. 35). Such precision and reality is undoubtedly peculiar and essential to all great literature, often also in decidedly spiritual-religious literature, as in the imagery of the Psalms. And the demand of significant realism to which all surface, but also all extravagance is alien, this glory in Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, Keller, Tolstoy, is so greatly recognized in art (at least in the novel in recent times), if not actually

fulfilled at high points, as if there had never been a mistrust born of the love of truth towards the Magister Ludi and his box of tricks. And yet artists, however concrete they are, have not *settled* the aesthetic question of truth; at best they have extended it in a desirable and significant way and made it more precise. For precisely in the realistic work of art we see that as a *work of art* it is still nevertheless something other than a source of historical and natural historical knowledge, or even insights. It is characterized by exquisite words which do after all also exaggerate what is so tellingly described by them beyond its given station, it is characterized above all by fantasizing, which bustles around between characters and events with a degree of licence highly alien to science. Fantasizing and in addition, in both senses of the word, art-fullness, by means of which invented material fills up the gaps in what has been concretely observed and rounds the plot into well-curved arches. An appearance of rounding, over-rounding, is in any case unmistakable even in the most realistic artistic creations, particularly in artistic novels. And great appearance has a quite 'surpassing' effect in those works of art which do not offer themselves primarily as realistic, either because they consciously romanticize alongside or beyond available existence, or because, far beyond a mere 'subject', they fructify – myth, which is the oldest sustenance of art anyway. Giotto's 'Raising of Lazarus', Dante's 'Paradiso', Heaven in the final part of Faust: how do these stand – beyond all detailed realism – in relation to the philosophers' inquiry after truth? They are undoubtedly not true in the sense that the knowledge we have acquired of the world is true, but then what does the enormous wonderment at the after all inseparable form-content of these works mean, in a legitimate, world-related manner? Thus, astonishingly, although on a completely different level, the 'Qu'est-ce que cela prouve?' of that French mathematician becomes irrefutable, even without mathematics and completely without drollery. In other words: the question as to the truth of art becomes philosophically the question as to the possibly available depictability of beautiful appearance, as to its degree of reality in the by no means single-layered reality of the world, as to the location of its object-correlate. Utopia as object-determination, with the degree of existence of the Real Possible, thus encounters in the shimmering phenomenon of art a particularly fruitful problem of probation. And the answer to the aesthetic question of truth is: artistic appearance is not only mere appearance, but a meaning, cloaked in images and which can only be described in images, of material that has been driven further, wherever *the exaggeration and fantasizing represent a significant pre-appearance, circulating*

in turbulent existence itself, of what is real, a pre-appearance which can specifically be represented in aesthetically immanent terms. What habitual or unblunted sense can hardly still see is illuminated here, in individual processes as well as social and natural ones. This pre-appearance becomes attainable precisely because art drives its material to an end, in characters, situations, plots, landscapes, and brings them to a stated resolution in suffering, happiness and meaning. Pre-appearance is this attainable thing itself because the *métier* of *driving-to-the-end* occurs in *dialectically open space*, in which any Object can be aesthetically represented. Aesthetically represented, this means: immanently more achieved, more thoroughly formed, more essential than in the immediate-sensory or immediate-historical occurrence of this Object. This thorough formation remains appearance even as pre-appearance, but it does not remain illusion; instead, everything that appears in the artistic image is sharpened or condensed to a decisiveness which the reality of experience in fact only seldom shows, but which is most definitely inherent in the subjects. Art clearly indicates this with founded appearance, in the theatre regarded as paradigmatic institution. It remains virtual, but in the same sense as a reflection is virtual, i.e. reproduces an Object outside itself with all its dimensions of depth on the reflecting surface. And the pre-appearance, in contrast to religious pre-appearance, remains immanent despite all transcendence: it expands, as Schiller in fact defined aesthetic realism using Goethe as an example, it expands 'nature, without going beyond it'. Beauty, even sublimity are thus representative of an existence for Objects which has not yet become, of thoroughly formed world without external chance, without unessentiality, unrenderedness. The motto of aesthetically attempted pre-appearance runs along these lines: how could the *world be perfected without this world being exploded and apocalyptically vanishing, as in Christian-religious pre-appearance* (cf. also: Ernst Bloch, *Geist der Utopie*, 1923, p. 141). Art, with its formations which are always individual and concrete, seeks this perfection only in these formations, with the Total as penetratingly viewed Particular; whereas religion, of course, seeks utopian perfection in totality and places the salvation of the individual matter completely in the Totum, in the: 'I make all things new'.* Man is supposed to be born again here, society transformed into *Civitas Dei*, nature transfigured into the celestial. Whereas art remains rounded, when 'classical' it loves the coastal trip around the given, even when it is Gothic, despite all venturing beyond, it has something balanced, homogenized in

* Rev. 21. 5: 'Behold, I make all things new'.

it. Only music works explosively, occurring in open space, for which reason this art always carries something eccentric in it compared with the other arts, just as if it were only transposed on to the level of the beautiful or the sublime. All other arts pursue the representation of the pure carat in individual figures, situations, plots from the world, without exploding this world; hence the perfect visibility of this pre-appearance. Thus art is non-illusion, since it works along a line of extension from the Become, in its formed, more commensurate expression. This goes so far that a writer from antiquity, Juvenal, in order to express all the possible horrors of a storm, calls the storm 'poetica tempestas'. This goes so deep that Goethe, in his commentary on Diderot's 'Essay on Painting', posits concentration as realism, against merely reproductive naturalism: 'And thus the artist, grateful to nature, which also produced him, gives her a second nature in return, but one that is felt and thought and humanly perfected.' This humanized nature is however at the same time one that is more perfected in itself; not of course in the manner of sensory appearance of an idea which is finished anyway, as Hegel teaches, but rather in the direction of increasingly entelechetic expression, as Aristotle states. In fact, precisely this entelechetically or, as Aristotle also says, typically resolving force is powerfully remembered afresh in Engels' statement that realistic art is representation of typical characters in typical situations. Whereby the typical in Engels' definition obviously does not mean the average, but the significantly characteristic, in short, the essential image of the matter, decisively developed through exemplary instances. Along this line, therefore, lies the solution of the aesthetic question of truth: *Art is a laboratory and also a feast of implemented possibilities*, together with the thoroughly experienced alternatives therein, whereby the implementation and the result occur in the manner of founded appearance, namely of worldly perfected pre-appearance. In great art, exaggeration and fantasizing are most visibly applied to tendential consistency and concrete utopia. Though whether the call for perfection – we can call it the godless prayer of poetry – becomes practical even only to a small extent and does not merely remain in aesthetic pre-appearance is something which is not decided in poetry, but in society. Only controlled history, with an incisive counter-move against inhibitions, with active promotion of tendency, can help essential material in the distance of art to become increasingly also appearance in the dealings of life. This is then of course the same as – iconoclasm that has become correct, not as destruction of artistic images, but as a breaking into them – for the purpose of fructifying what is possibly contained in them, not only typically,

but paradigmatically, i.e. in exemplary fashion. And wherever art does not play itself out into illusion, beauty and even sublimity is that which mediates a premonition of future freedom. Often rounded, never closed: this life-maxim of Goethe's is also that of art – with the accent of conscience and substance ultimately on the unclosed.

False autarky; pre-appearance as real fragment

Often rounded: it does not suit a beautiful image to present itself as incomplete. What is unfinished is external to it, does not belong to it, and the artist who has not finished what he had to do is unhappy about it. This is quite correct and obvious, in so far as and as long as it is merely a matter of sufficient strength of form. The source of artfulness is the ability which understands and thus totally wants to acquire its subject-matter. But of course, precisely for the sake of non-isolated acquisition, the threat of that artfulness must also repeatedly be noted which arises not out of ability but out of the share of *mere appearance* which even pre-appearance has. The appeal of pleasing perception and its representation, however imaginary what is represented may possibly be, is enough to satisfy mere appearance. Indeed, the imaginary or what has become imaginary can lend mere appearance a particularly decorative roundedness, one in which the seriousness of the subject-matter hardly disturbs, let alone interrupts, the beautifully coherent game. Precisely because mere appearance lets images live alongside each other so easily, so unreally, it guarantees that pleasing superficial coherence which shows no interest and presence whatever of a subject-matter beyond sheer illusion. The lack of belief in the represented subject-matter can even be a help to the smooth illusion, even more so than scepticism. This showed itself in Renaissance painting with regard to the gods of antiquity, in depicting whom the painter did not need to fear he had not behaved sufficiently discreetly towards the sacred; the same thing showed itself a little later in mythologically rounded poetry. Camões in the 'Lusiads' has his goddess Themis say quite ironically and yet in the most luxuriant verse that she herself and Saturn, Jupiter and all the other gods that appear are 'vain creatures of fantasy born to mortals out of blind madness, only serving to lend charm to the song'. Through the use of beautiful appearance mythological substance was indeed held in memory here, in fact introduced into the possible allegories of a pre-appearance, but by means of that finished fullness especially invited

by appearance which is never interrupted. And finally, a further invitation to this comes from the side of *immanence without an exploding crack*, which surrounds all art, not just the art of classical antiquity or that imitating classical antiquity. Precisely the art of the Middle Ages provides many examples of a rounded-off satisfaction of an aesthetic kind, despite its religious-transcendental conscience. Gothic art contains this conscience, but there was equally a curious harmony in it which derived from classical Greek balance. The early Lukács observed quite acutely, if somewhat exaggeratedly: 'So a new polis arose from the church. . . , the ladder of the earthly and heavenly hierarchies from the crack. And in Giotto and Dante, in Wolfram* and Pisano, in Thomas Aquinas and St Francis the world became round again, surveyable, the abyss lost the danger of its actual depth: but without losing any of its blackly shining strength, all its darkness became pure surface and thus fitted smoothly into a closed unity of colours; the cry for redemption became dissonance in the perfect rhythmical system of the world and made a new balance possible, but no less colourful and perfect than that of the Greeks: that of inadequate, heterogeneous intensities' (*Die Theorie des Romans*, 1920, p. 20f.). German secessions of Gothic art like that of Grünewald are of course unaffected by this kind of perfection. However, this hypostasis of the aesthetic confronts us in an even more closed fashion, though by no means in classical strength, from the Middle Ages, which remained determined by the Mediterranean. And there is within it an equilibrium and a finished coherence which is not only idealistic, but ultimately derives from – great Pan, this primal image of all rounding. Pan is the one and all of the world which had also been revered as that whole which lacks nothing. Hence the ultimate seduction to nothing but rounding, but hence also Greek balance as secularized form of the totally pagan, i.e. *crackless world-picture: the astral myth*. In this myth the cosmos really was 'decoration', i.e. evenly beautiful; it was something ceaselessly circling within itself and *hen kai pan* a circle itself and not an open parabola, a sphere and not a process-fragment. Thus it is not without reason that art is very often pantheistically disposed in this all too rounding form, and not without reason that, conversely, a system formulated in a finished way appears pleasantly beautiful even in extra-artistic occurrence. The pleasure in sensory appearance, in the living mantle of divinity, certainly contributes to this pantheistic trait, but the seductive pull towards it is

* Wolfram von Eschenbach, fl.c. 1200–20, wrote 'Parzival', the greatest German romance of the Middle Ages.

even stronger from the harmoniously undisturbed coherence, the 'cosmos' even without 'universe'. All these are therefore the various reasons why a veritable art-fullness, an autarky of apparent enclosedness can also exist in a work of art, which, because it is excessive and immanent, at first masks the pre-appearance. But equally, and this is precisely the crucial difference and the crucial truth, all great art shows the pleasant and homogeneous aspects of its work-based coherence broken, broken up, leafed open by its own iconoclasm, wherever immanence is not driven to closedness of form and content, wherever it still poses as *fragment-like*. Here – completely incomparable with the mere contingency of the fragmentary in the avoidable sense – another hollow space of a factual, highly factual kind opens up, with *unrounded immanence*. And it is precisely in this space that the *aesthetic-utopian meanings* of the beautiful, even the sublime make their presence felt. Only what is broken into pieces in the all too stilled work of art, mixed with the atmosphere of the gallery, one which has become a mere objet d'art or, to put it a much better way: the itself already shaped openness in great artistic creations gives the material and the form for a cipher of the authentic.

Never closed: thus precisely the all too beautiful breaks into life when the varnish cracks. When the surface pales or darkens, as in the evening when the light falls obliquely and the mountains emerge. The shattering of the surface and furthermore of the merely cultural-ideological context in which the works have stood exposes depth wherever it exists. What is meant here is not the sentimental ruin nor that kind of torso which, as so often with Greek statues, holds the figure together more tightly and produces greater block unity and plastic rigour. This sort of thing can of course be improvement of form, but not necessarily the intensification of the cipher which is what matters here. This only occurs through the fissures of disintegration, in the quite specific sense which disintegration possesses concerning the objet d'art and as transformation of the objet d'art. In this way, instead of ruin or torso, a *belated* fragment arises, one which can do better justice to the depth contents of art than the completedness which the work sought to manifest there and then. Every great art, even one as inherently so completely closed as that of Egypt, thus becomes a belated fragment, by disintegrating into essentiality; because the utopian ground opens up in which the work of art had been registered. Although the acquisition of the cultural heritage always has to be critical, this acquisition contains, as a particularly important factor, the self-dispersal of what has been made into the museum-bound objet d'art, but also of the false enclosedness which the work of art sought to have there and then and which further intensifies

in museum-bound contemplation. The insular quality cracks, a series of figures full of open, experimental symbolic formations opens up. All the more so when the phenomenon of the belated fragment combines with that *created in the work of art itself*: not in fact in the usual, flat sense of the fragmentary as that which could not be done or that which remained by chance unfinished, but in the concrete sense of that which, at the highest level of mastery, is unclosed, of that which is *transformed through utopian pressure*. This is the case in great Gothic art, sometimes also in the Baroque, which despite all the power of the work, indeed because of it, had a hollow space and behind it a fertile darkness. Thus precisely fully-executed Gothic, despite Pan's presence here too, executes a fragment composed of central un-finish-ability. Peculiar, if then fragments arise even in the usual sense of brokenness, and yet in the unusual, though solely legitimate sense of an appearing *Ultimum* only hinted at. This is so in the work of Michelangelo, who left more fragments behind than any other great master, and in fact remarkably in his most characteristic concern, in his sculpture and not in his painting. Since in the latter he finished everything he began, whereas with statues and also in architecture he set a disproportionately large amount of half-completed work on one side, never turned to it again and left it behind. Vasari gave art history the signal to wonder at the meagre amount of totally finished material in Michelangelo's work and to wonder all the more since the enormity in the intended goal nevertheless corresponded so completely to the power and nature of this genius. But what offered resistance to artistic rounding, artistic completion here was precisely the corresponding element to enormity in Michelangelo himself, was the agreement between an overpowerful nature and the overpowering character of a task in such a way that no work executed could satisfy this adequation, so that in fact completion itself, driven so deeply into the Absolute, becomes a fragment. This kind of fragment is then nothing less than an ingredient of the un-temple-like, of the unharmonized cathedralic, is the conscience: Gothic even post festum. The depth of aesthetic completion brings the very dimension of the uncompleted into play: to this extent even the non-fragmentary, in the usual sense, in Michelangelo, the figures on the Medici tomb as much as the dome of St Peter's Basilica, stretches into that excessive measure which is the measure of the *Ultimum* in art. Hence finally the legitimately, namely materially fragmentary quality, in all works of this ultimate kind, in the West-östlicher Divan, * in Beethoven's last quartets,

* A cycle of later Goethe poems inspired by intensive reading of Persian poetry in 1814 when the poet was already sixty-five.

in Faust, in short, wherever unfinishability lends greatness in finishing. And if we look for the reason, which in ideological terms most definitely continues to operate, for such internal iconoclasm in greatly completed art and precisely in this, then it lies in the pathos of path and process, in the eschatological conscience that came into the world through the Bible. Totality in the religion of the Exodus and the Kingdom is solely of a totally transforming and exploding kind, is utopian; and, confronted with this totality, not only our knowledge, but also the whole of what has previously become, to which our conscience refers, then appears as unfinished work. As unfinished work or objective fragment precisely also in the most productive sense, not only in that of creatural limitation, let alone resignation. The 'Behold, I make all things new', in the sense of apocalyptic explosion, is written above this and influences all great art with the spirit after which Dürer named his Gothic creation *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris*. Man is still not solid, the course of the world is still undecided, unclosed, and so also is the depth in all aesthetic information: *this utopian factor is the paradox in aesthetic immanence, the most fundamentally immanent paradox in this immanence itself*. Without such potency for the fragment, aesthetic imagination would of course have sufficient perception in the world, more than any other human apperception, but it would ultimately have no correlate. For the world itself, just as it is in a mess, is also in a state of unfinishedness and in experimental process out of that mess. The shapes which this process throws up, the ciphers, allegories and symbols in which it is so rich, are *all themselves still fragments, real fragments, through which process streams unclosed and advances dialectically to further fragmentary forms*. The fragmentary holds good for the symbol too, although the symbol does not refer to process, but to the *unum necessarium* within it; but precisely because of this reference and because of the fact that it is only a reference and not an arrival, the symbol also contains fragment. The real symbol itself is in fact only one because, instead of being disguised merely to the observer and inherently clear, it is precisely not yet inherently manifest. This therefore constitutes the meaning of the fragment, seen from the perspective of art, and not only from that of art; the fragment lies in the subject-matter itself, it still belongs, *rebus sic imperfectis et fluentibus*, to the subject-matter of the world. Concrete utopia as object-determination presupposes concrete fragment as object-determination and involves it, even though certainly as an ultimately revocable fragment. And therefore every artistic, and especially every religious pre-appearance is only concrete on the basis and to the extent that the fragmentary in

the world ultimately presents the layer and the material for it to constitute itself as pre-appearance.

It is a question of realism, everything real has a horizon

To stick to things, to sail over them, both are wrong. Both remain external, superficial, abstract, and being immediate, cannot get away from the surface. Sticking keeps to it anyway, sailing over has it in its own unruly inner dimension as well as in the other, merely evaporated dimension of immediacy to which it escapes. Nevertheless, of course, sailing over belongs to a higher human type than taking things as they are. And above all: sticking to these things remains flat even when it is considered, that is, empiricist, whereas enthusiasm, when it is considered, can most definitely stop being bottomless. The flat empiricist and the effusive enthusiast are constantly surprised by the flow of the real, which neither of them grasp, but the former, as a fetishist of so-called facts, remains obstinate, whereas the fantast is possibly teachable. In the world only reification, which keeps a firm hold on individual moments of process and anchors them as facts, suits the empiricist, and he stands and falls by it. Whereas sailing over is itself at least in motion, i.e. in an attitude which need not fundamentally remain unmediable with real motion. In creation, sailing over has art on its side, albeit with much appearance, much dubious escape to a downright intentionally untrue dream-appearance. But the concrete correction of sailing over opens up in art, and not only in art, images, insights, tendencies which occur simultaneously in man and in the object assigned to him. Precisely this concrete dimension does not rise from the perspective of grovelling empiricism and the naturalism that corresponds to it in aesthetic terms, which never advances from the establishment of what is factual to the exploration of what is essentially happening. Whereas imagination, as soon as it appears concretely, knows how to visualize not only sensory abundance, but also the mediation-relations in and behind the immediacy of real experience. Instead of the isolated fact and the superficial context of abstract immediacy which is likewise isolated from the whole, the relation of appearances to the whole of their epoch and to the utopian Totum located in process now emerges. Art becomes knowledge with the help of imagination of this kind, namely through telling individual images and overall pictures of a characteristically typical kind; it pursues the 'significant aspect' of appearances and executes it. Science, with the help of imagination of

this kind, grasps the 'significant aspect' of appearances through concepts, which never remain abstract, never allow the phenomenon to fade, let alone be lost. And the 'significant aspect' is in art and science the particular aspect of the general, the respective instance for the dialectically open context, the respective characteristically typical figure of the Totum. And the actual Totum, this dimension in which even the epochally grasped whole of all epochal moments is itself again a moment, shows itself precisely in broadly mediated great works only on the horizon, not in an already thoroughly formed reality. Everything living, says Goethe, has an atmosphere around it; everything real in general, because it is life, process, and can be a correlate of objective imagination, has a horizon. An inner horizon, extending vertically as it were, in the self-dark, an external one of great breadth, in the world-light; and the regions behind both horizons are filled with the same utopia, are consequently identical in the Ultimatum. Where the prospective horizon is omitted, reality only appears as become, as dead, and it is the dead, namely naturalists and empiricists, who are burying their dead here. Where the prospective horizon is continuously included in the reckoning, the real appears as what it is in concreto: as the path-network of dialectical processes which occur in an unfinished world, in a world which would not be in the least changeable without the enormous future: real possibility in that world. Together with that Totum which does not represent the isolated whole of a respective section of process, but the whole of the subject-matter pending in process overall, hence still tendential and latent. This alone is realism, it is of course inaccessible to that schematism which knows everything in advance, which considers its uniform, in fact even formalistic, stencil to be reality. Reality without real possibility is not complete, the world without future-laden properties does not deserve a glance, an art, a science any more than that of the bourgeois conformist. *Concrete utopia stands on the horizon of every reality; real possibility surrounds the open dialectical tendencies and latencies to the very last.* By these the unconcluded motion of unconcluded matter – and motion is, in that profound phrase of Aristotle, 'uncompleted entelechy' – is arch-realistically pervaded.

THE LAYERS OF THE CATEGORY POSSIBILITY 18

How often something presents itself in such a way that it can be. Or even in such a way that it can be different than it was before, which is